

PACIFICA

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Samoa 2018 Overprints – The 5 Issued Values (see P55 for full details & Errors)

THE PACIFIC ISLANDS STUDY CIRCLE

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Contents

PISC Chairman's Remarks; Membership News	37
Christmas Island (Indian Ocean) – Regular postmarks from March 1993 to end of 2016	38
Easter Island – Two new Official Handstamps	41
Fiji – More QEII Varieties; the “Spaven” flaw a Correction and revised illustration	41
Fiji - U.S. Forces in Fiji during World War II (Part 2	43
GEIC – Blasting Coral Reefs in the Gilbert & Ellice Islands (1962	49
Marshall Islands	50
Socorro Island Re-Visited (and yet another Island	53
Tonga – An Appeal for Help	54
Samoa – the 2018 Overprints (Print Details – Errors and Varieties	55
The Guy Slatter Auction – Prices Realised	56

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Chairman's Jottings

In my Chairman's Jottings in the April issue of *Pacifica* there was a paragraph on PISC's future plans, starting off: "By the time you read this issue of *Pacifica*, we should have had our meeting, including the AGM, at the Royal Philatelic Society's new premises." I wrote this in late February and by the time *Pacifica* appeared things had greatly changed as the United Kingdom was hit by the Coronavirus pandemic; at least I had used the word 'should' rather than 'would.' Besides this meeting planned for 28th March having to be cancelled, other future plans have had to be abandoned: our meeting at London 2020 and PISC's presentation to the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain in early September.



The London 2020 exhibition has been moved forward to early 2022. A room booking equivalent to our plan for 2020 has been made for the afternoon of Friday 25th February 2022. Following the cancellation of Congress the ABPS have organised a philatelic weekend at Market Harborough on 29th and 21st March 2021 and PISC have provisionally agreed to give a presentation. Also, we have accepted an invitation from the New Zealand Society of Great Britain to join with them in a Saturday meeting in London, probably in the second half of 2021.

At the time of writing (1st June) the Guy Slatter auction of Gilbert and Ellice Islands has recently finished, with a sales total of about £3000 expected to be realised. I would like to thank Bryan Jones for his work in organising the auction which included scanning a very large number of items. Thanks also go to Hugh Bennet for his help with the auction lots and to Bill Hamilton for putting the auction on the website. Two valuable items from Guy Slatter's collection have been entered into a forthcoming Grosvenor auction in order to attract a wider audience: a George V £1 fine used on piece and the same £1 stamp, unmounted mint.

At the present time I notice that chairmen, presidents, journal editors and secretaries of philatelic societies encourage their members to write up items in their collections, prepare exhibits and write articles at a time when activities away from home have been cancelled and, for many, spending much time at home been enforced upon them. While I would join with such encouragements, the unusually warm and sunny weather has often pulled me in the opposite direction towards the outside, whether in the garden or walking in the nearby countryside.

Laurence Kimpton

Membership News

New Members.

Marc Hammond, Interests:- Stamps & P.H-Christmas, Cocos; Nauru; Pitcairn; Tokelau; Campbell; Juan Fernandez, Clipperton.

Rick Rosinski, Interests:- General, especially Tonga.

Vince Sgro, Interests:- General – Stamps.

Doug Spencer, Interests:- Cocos,; Papua; New Guinea.

Resigned. R Peden; M Taylor; G McDonald/

Lapsed. S Parker; D Neiman; J Seidl; D Pollard; H McMakin.

Christmas Island (Indian Ocean) regular postmarks from March 1993 until the end of 2016

By Rufus Barnes

For some considerable time members of the Study Circle have been pressing me to do some work trying to identify the 'regular' postmarks used on Christmas Island since Australia Post took control of the island's post office in 1993. The reduced movements imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic have proved an excellent time to turn to my stamp collections and it is now the turn of my Christmas Island collection!

One of the reasons for my reluctance to get down to this piece of research has been the lack of help available from the Christmas Island post office. Indeed, when I returned to the island in 2013 the clerk on duty was unwilling to let me have clean copies of the markings in use, saying that she was not allowed to do so. It was very disheartening. Eventually, since I have always liked to have complete collections, and Christmas Island became ridiculously expensive if one bought the cheque books of self-adhesive new issues, I stopped collecting new issues at the end of 2016. I admit to having turned my attention to other collections (including Easter Island in the PISC area) which have benefitted from more focussed attention!

I have trawled through covers in my possession and have identified a number of postmarks, including a few apparent anomalies. I am not, currently, able to give information as to when different postmarks were introduced or withdrawn. The article excludes reference to the pictorial postmark of a crab which has been in use in parallel with plain postmarks for a number of years, so I cannot comment as to whether more than one type of this exists. I have also excluded the 'Christmas Greetings from Christmas Island' postmark of which I know at least two hand stamps exist.

The first postmark of the post 'independent' post office era was introduced on or about 4 March 1993 (fig 1). It was the first postmark to include the word 'Australia'. It does not appear to have lasted well and by the end of 1993 it was looking quite worn. It appears that the year slugs are larger than the day and month slugs.



A similar postmark (fig 2), which is readily distinguishable from its predecessor because the wording is smaller and is set significantly further away from the rim, was introduced sometime late in 1993. The example shown is dated 24 November 1993 and is on a cover which definitely came from the island – an important point because a virtually identical postmark exists (fig 3), and remains in use at the Australian Philatelic Bureau,



to meet requests from philatelists for postmarked stamps and covers. The date line on this postmark is a little higher and the wording sharper than on my example of fig 2. It is worth pointing out that the continued use of the postmark in fig 3 at the Philatelic Bureau enables philatelists to separate out covers that have originated



on the island from those that have never seen the island!

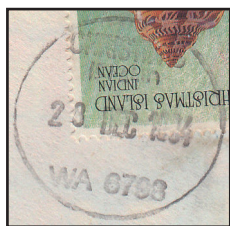


Fig 4 shows an entirely new type of postmark on a cover dated the 28th of December 1994. I don't know when it was introduced or whether it was used for a time in parallel with type fig 2. It is notable that this postmark refers only to 'WA' (Western Australia) and not 'Australia'. I seem to think that this postmark had a short working life because there were problems changing the date line.

The 'Australia' designation returned on the postmark fig 5. It is similar to fig 1 but smaller. Like fig 1 the letters are serif in style. My example is dated March 1995. Was it used in parallel with fig 4, or was it a replacement for fig 4, which looked quite worn in December 1994?



Fig 6 was certainly in use in May 1996. It is unique in the period covered by this article in having a curved "Australia" at the bottom of the postmark and a straight "6798" immediately above it.

I have never seen fig 7 except on the front of some of the locally produced booklets in 1996.

My example is dated 30 Aug 1996 and is unique amongst the postmarks in my possession in that the bottom curved section reads "Australia 6798"



Fig 8 was certainly in use by October 1996. Like fig 5, it has an 'Australia' designation. Unlike fig 5 the lettering around the edge is sans-serif.

This datestamp, however, provides for some confusion.



In April 2001 the then postmistress of the island sent me a card (fig 9 – illustration reduced in size) with a copy of all the postmarks she used at the post office (she was the last postmistress/postmaster to provide me with any assistance).

Postmark type fig 8 is not shown on this card. However, I have a cover dated 11 December 2003 which clearly shows that postmark. I can only assume that the postmistress's reference to 'the postmarks she uses' did not include others held but not used in April 2001. This only adds to the difficulty in trying to record periods of use of different postmarks!

Fig 10 shows a postmark I have only recently noticed. It is dated 12 Mar 2001 and the lettering is very sharp. I have no other covers cancelled with this postmark.



It looks very similar to fig 11 which was in use by April 2001, but which has a double row of lines above and below the date line.



A further designation change appeared in fig 12. A reversion to 'WA', rather than 'Australia' but now with the addition of (LPO) – Licenced Post Office.



My most recent regular postmark can be seen in fig 13. This was the postmark in use during my 2013 visit. It is similar in style to fig 12, but without the '(LPO)'.



Finally I refer to a special type of postmark, which I understand was introduced to deal with bulk mailings where no stamp was required on the cover. This is illustrated as fig 14. The examples in my possession were part of an order placed by me with the island's post office for examples of all the postmarks then in use. I have never seen any others. I am not convinced that Christmas Island had any real use for such a postmark!



This article raises a number of questions that currently I am unable to answer:

When was each postmark introduced into service and when were they withdrawn?

Once withdrawn from regular use, were the postmarks retained for use if needed?

There is a large time gap between the postmark shown as fig 12 and that shown as fig 13. The history of postmarks used on the island from 1993 suggests that in most cases they were replaced about once a year. Were there other types used in that period?

What about the period after 2013?

Do any other examples of the 'PAID' postmark (fig 14) exist?

I would welcome any additional information on these postmarks and other regular postmarks used on the island between March 1993 and the end of 2016. If possible I should like to produce a definitive guide to help collectors in the future.

Easter Island – Two new Official handstamps

From David Maddock



The cover illustrated came with a new Official handstamp on the reverse, but in addition, with the original letter still enclosed (taking the original writer to task for making a request, but without enclosing an International Reply Paid coupon), another new handstamp of the manager responding to this enquiry.



Fiji – More QEII Varieties

From Paul Xavier

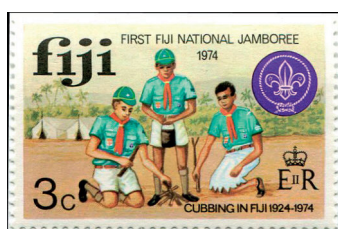
I



Examining some material that I obtained from the late Gordon Rodger's estate I came across two items which think are worthy of mention.

QEII 2/- 1967 16th May Second Printing. (SG319a).

Apple Green; Green and Copper. Two used examples with distinct doubling of the vignette.



1974 Fiji Scout Jamboree. 3c value (SG499) – 4 used copies all with inverted watermark.

Well worth a check of these items in your own collections, you may also strike lucky!

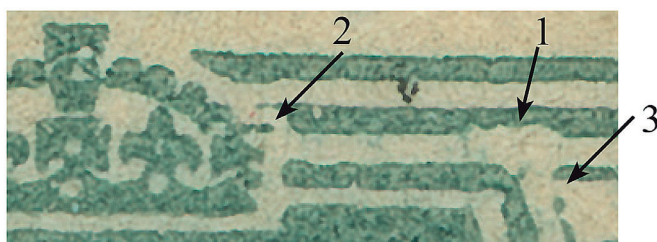
Fiji – The “Spaven” Flaws. (A Correction)

The article included in the April Edition of *Pacifica* (page 27) relating to the “Spaven” flaw was in fact, (the result of some over exuberance on behalf of your Editor), incorrect in that a different flaw also present on the illustrated stamp was assigned to “Spaven”. This fact was rapidly drawn to my attention by both David Alford and David Gillis, and I am pleased to have the opportunity of putting the record straight.

The “Spaven” flaws, (for there are three different elements) can be found on the 1903 and the 1906-12 KEVII definitives. These are shown on a revised copy of the original 1/- illustration, together with a used 1d copy provided by David Gillis.

The three elements listed below are those now shown in the latest SG Catalogue (Part 1):-

- 1) Longer flaw on the lower edge of the frame line
- 2) Flaw on the inside of the right hand corner of the crown
- 3) Break in the top left corner of the right hand emblem frame



It appears that these flaws can be found on all values of the 1903 and 1906-12 set, albeit less distinct in some cases. David Gillis first came across these on “Specimen” overprints of the 1906 issue with the flaws identified as “pronounced” on the 5/-; “moderate” on the 2½d; & “slight” on the £1. He has also identified the flaws on values from the earlier 1903 issue overprinted for use in the **New Hebrides Condominium**.

These flaws were first included in the SG Part 1 2020 catalogue, described as “*damaged frame and crown*” with the three elements above listed. The sheet position for this “Spaven flaw” is Row 1. Position 3. The listing of individual values is, based upon latest feedback, incomplete. The 2020 Part 1 catalogue listing for New Hebrides Condominium also includes this variety for the first time.



Fiji – U.S. Forces in Fiji during World War II –Part 2

By Bryan Jones

(continued from April 2020 Pacifica – Page 26)

Locations for U.S. Forces Bases in Fiji. (Map to follow in future instalment)

All units of the U.S. Forces based in Fiji, whether combat; support; Army Air Force or U.S. Navy, were located on Viti Levu in the area between Suva and Lautoka. There is no evidence that any of these forces were located on Vanua Levu, or any of the other islands.

The Headquarters for U.S. Forces was, as might be expected, in Suva, which was also the main office of the Provisional Army Postal Unit serving A.P.O. 913 (subsequently reactivated as 13th Base Post Office in mid-August 1943).

Airfields taken over, or created during this period, included the Martintar airstrip established by the previous N.Z. Forces, the fledgling airfield at Nadi, and newly created airfields at Narewa (adjacent to Nadi township); and Nausori (some 22km from Suva).

Apart from the main office of A.P.O. 913 in Suva, it is recorded that there were also six sub-offices, sub-office 1 being located at Nadi Airfield. It can be assumed that other sub-offices could have been at Naboutini (H.Q. for 37th Infantry Div) and Vunyasi (H.Q. for Americal Division), plus one at the Lautoka waterfront from which incoming and outgoing military cargo was handled. At its peak, in December 1943 the total strength of the Base Post Office was 68 personnel, but twelve months later it had reduced to 31 personnel.

Postal Rates for U.S. Forces based in Fiji

Until mid-September 1942 there was no airmail service available for those based in Fiji, all mail was therefore sent by surface at no charge, (for units on Active Service). Surface mail was sent on the first returning vessel which had sufficient space to spare, this sometime meant that it could take at least three weeks to reach the U.S mainland.

With effect from mid-September 1942 the NATS (National Air Transport Service) was extended to include Fiji and, again to some extent based on the availability of space on transport aircraft returning to the U.S, accumulated mail would be carried. There was a single rate of 6c for a basic 20g letter, with supplementary increases for heavier items.

Registration (rarely used) was 20c, plus 1c if a receipt on arrival was required.

Special Delivery (again rarely used) 10c, probably equivalent to “Signed For”

Preprinted postcards were charged at 1c.

There was one notable exception to these rates. War Ballot envelopes, both large and small, were entitled to “free” airmail, provided that the specially preprinted envelopes were used, and that the only contents were the votes of the individual.

The example illustrated, for an election to be held at Hartford, Conn on 7 November 1944, has an arrival backstamp for 6 October, 7 days in transit. In addition there is no evidence of censorship at either unit level or elsewhere. The only examples of this concessionary service I have found are all from this particular election.

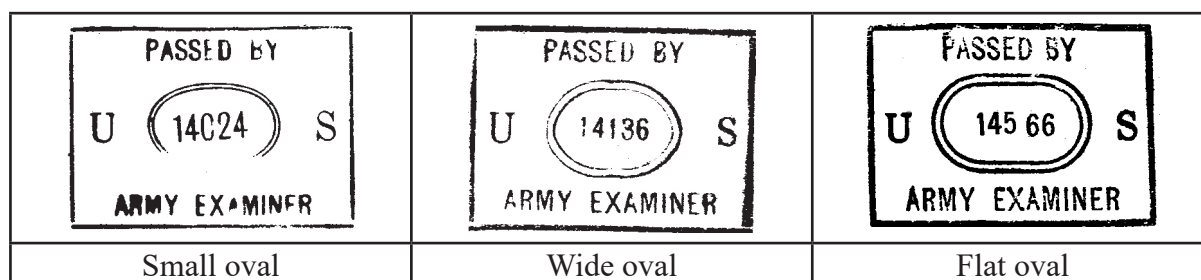
NAME AND RETURN ADDRESS OF SENDER		OFFICIAL ABSENTEE BALLOT	
V3 James Pillion 31141533		[Redacted]	
KIRKA-7341111 1st Bn.		[Redacted]	
APO 913 9th P.M. San Francisco, Cal.		[Redacted]	
<div style="text-align: right;"> FREE OF POSTAGE Includes Air Mail (No 2440) 1944 913 A.P.O. </div>			
OFFICIAL ELECTION WAR BALLOT . . . VIA AIR MAIL			
James E. Pillion Name of elector 57 Bushnell Street Pre 71 Street and number of elector's voting residence NOV 7 1944 Date of election at which ballot is to be cast		Town City Borough Clerk of HARTFORD State of Connecticut	

One variation to the “Free” surface mail service exists. There are indications that, as the centre of conflict moved further away from Fiji, with Fiji itself downgraded to that of a support facility, coupled with the increase in flights through the NATS service all mail, whether stamped or not, could be carried by air from Fiji if capacity happened to be available. Examples of unstamped “Free Mail” clearly carried by air (determined by arrival dates added to some items) can be found during the later months of the war.

Censorship of Mail

Essentially two levels of censorship applied to all mail from service personnel.

Every unit of any size, no matter where located, would be issued with one, or occasionally more, “Unit Censor” handstamps. These were rectangular in outline containing the words “Passed by/Army Examiner” with a unique censor number within an oval in the centre. There were in fact three different shaped ovals as shown in the illustrations below.



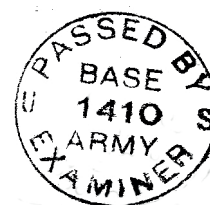
All outgoing mail would be censored and would receive the unit censor handstamp with the censor’s signature. These unit censor handstamps were effectively the property of that unit, if the unit moved they would accompany them and continue in use from the new location, whether in Fiji or elsewhere.

Apart from a small batch of unit censor numbers (07714; 07879-07896, issued to a few AAA Gun Battalions), all unit censor numbers issued to units located in Fiji come from a range 14000 to 14688 (from covers that I have recorded), with at least 30 showing usage from different units, at various times.

However in the event that the contents deviated from the normal letter, or if there were other enclosures, such as photographs (which had to be noted on the envelope), then the second level of censorship would also apply. Officer’s mail would, from time to time, bypass the unit censor and would only be censored by another officer using the local Base Censor handstamp.

This involved the local Base Censor, who would signify his acceptance for onward transmission by adding his “Base Censors” handstamp and adding his signature. The Base Censor handstamps were of a standard format as shown, those used in Fiji had a range of numbers 1400 to 1414.

It should be noted that there is no direct reference to censorship in any of the above. This mirrors the rules applied to censorship of civilian mail, where at the beginning of 1943 the term “Censor” was replaced by the less emotive term “Examiner”. This is reputed to have been a direct reflection of U.S civilian attitudes, who objected to their mail being “Censored”, but were quite prepared for it to be “Examined”.



Postal Markings, including datestamps

There are a large number of different markings, some with only minor differences, some unique to individual military units, and with the U.S Navy using a totally different range of markings to those employed by land based forces. I therefore propose to deal with these within the specific chapter relating to each of these different units, and then summarise them in a separate section at the end of this study.

37th Infantry Division

Whilst the organisation to support those units operating in the “front line”, together with the defence of their base on Viti Levu, gradually took shape during April/May 1942 onwards, under the umbrella of A.P.O. 913, the arrival of the 37th Infantry Division destined for front line operations in the Solomon Islands and beyond, introduced another A.P.O. into the equation.

The 37th Infantry Division arrived in Fiji between 10 June 1942 and 20 September 1942, and was located at Naboutini, on the Sabeto river, 5km east of Queens Road and some 16km north-east of Nadi. Its purpose was two-fold, initially to provide defence of the islands from possible invasion, and subsequently to complete its training programme, ready for front line operations in the Solomons/New Guinea.

The build-up of 37th Infantry Division units within Fiji was as follows:-

	Date of Arrival in Fiji	Date of Departure from Fiji
148 th Infantry Regiment	10 th June 1942	11 th April 1943
145 th Infantry Regiment	15 th July 1942	1 st April 1943
129 th Infantry Regiment	20 th September 1942	12 th March 1943
140 th Field Artillery Battalion	16 th June 1942	12 April 1943
135 th Field Artillery Battalion	28 th June 1942	2 nd April 1943
136 th Field Artillery Battalion	28 th June 1942	2 nd April 1943
6 th Field Artillery Battalion	8 th August 1942	11 th March 1943

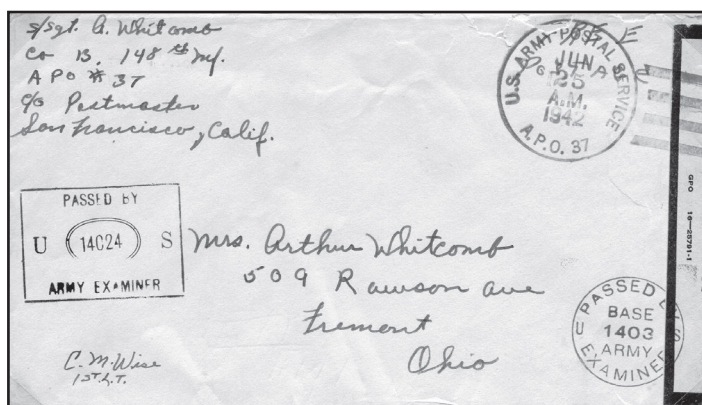
The division, with the exception of the 129th Infantry Regiment, moved to Guadalcanal in April 1943 after the beach-head had been secured, with two battalions then joining the Marines in New Georgia early in July 1943, and the remainder of the division, having completed its transfer by 22nd July joining the 43rd Infantry Division in the Munda campaign. The 129th Infantry Division was based in the New Hebrides from 13th March 1943 until early November 1943.

Postal History related to 37th Infantry Division

(Each item illustrated relates to a different feature).

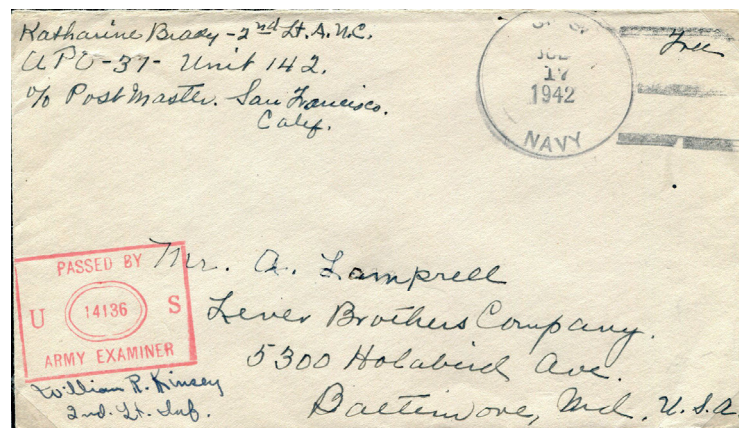
Early proven use from units located in Fiji

Dated 25th June 1942 earliest recorded example from 37th Infantry Division in Fiji, sender is a member of 148th Regiment, Company B. No air surface yet available so “Post Free” by surface. Initially censored by unit censor 14024 with censoring officer’s signature below. Then opened by the Base Censor, using handstamp 1403, who resealed the cover with a standard black resealing label. Finally (note “killer” bars of datestamp applied over resealing label) datestamp applied. This datestamp is the alternative U.S. Army Postal Service type with A.P.O.37 at base, date in 4 lines with time (A.M.) between month and year. At this early stage with security at its highest the involvement of the Base Censor (double checking the work of the unit censor), even though there is nothing unusual about this cover, deserves comment.



37th Infantry Division using U.S. Navy Postal facilities

This item has a number of features deserving comment. Firstly it is an early date, 17th July 1942, and was written by a female officer; 2nd Lieut Katharine Brady (A.N.C. – Nursing Corps), from Unit 142, A.P.O. 37. Unit 142 does not appear in the published list of units within the 37th Infantry Division, so was probably attached for a limited period and once ashore would soon be transferred to A.P.O. 913. Unit 142 became 142nd General Hospital, and as such would be one of the last units to arrive at its new base. Women were not allowed to be assigned to a combat unit during wartime, so we can be certain that Lt Brady was a member of the hospital staff. The use of the U.S. Navy datestamp probably indicates that this letter was written en-route and handed over during disembarkation. Then censored by a Lt in the 37th Infantry Division, the unit censor being applied in red, (only around 2% of covers recorded have the unit censor in red).

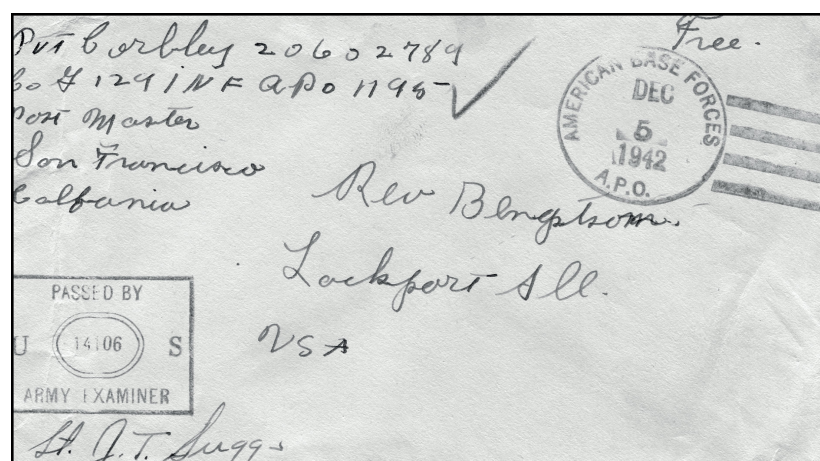


The Alternative A.P.O. A.P.O. 1195

As has already been stated the 129th Infantry Regiment arrived in Fiji some three months after the rest of the Division. This apparently necessitated the creation of a new “temporary” A.P.O. to cater for those units of the 129th Infantry Regiment left isolated by the departure of the rest of the Division. A.P.O. 1195 was therefore allocated to these units.

But while the remainder of 37th Infantry Division operated under A.P.O. 913 once they arrived in Fiji, it appears that those units using A.P.O. 1195 continued to do so when they eventually arrived in Fiji.

I have two examples of this from Company’s “G” and “M” of the 129th Infantry Regiment, dated October and December 1942, (one of which is illustrated), showing the senders address as A.P.O. 1195, but with American Base Forces datestamp and Unit Censor handstamps in use at A.P.O. 913 on these dates. These are the only examples of this temporary A.P.O. so far recorded.

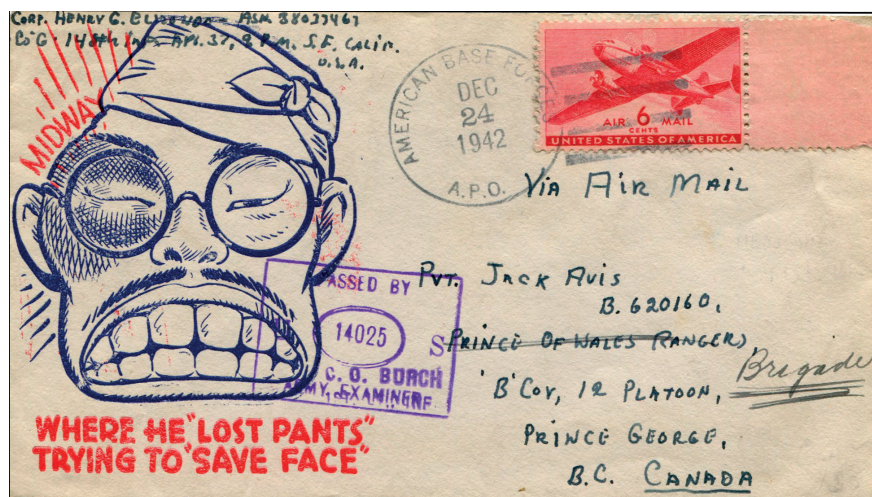


Patriotic or Cartoon Covers

There are a number of covers with printed patriotic exhortations to be found, but none quite as decorative as the cover illustrated. Apart from the “cartoon” there are features on this cover which deserve mention.

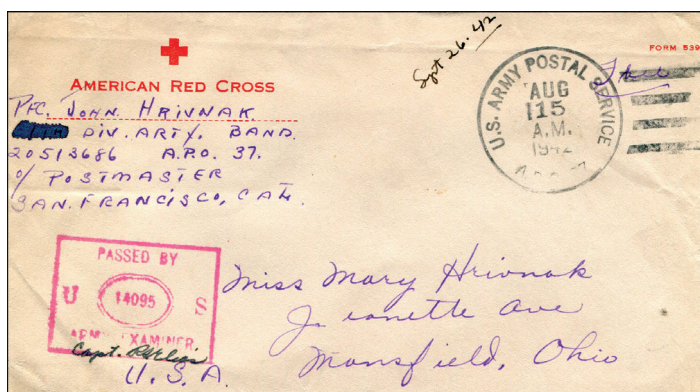
The Battle of Midway took place from 4th to 7th July 1942, and Co G, 148th Infantry Regiment, was one of the first units from 37th Infantry Division to arrive in Fiji, later that same month. It is highly unlikely that a patriotic cover of this type could have been obtained in Fiji, so soon after the event, so I believe that it must have been obtained on board the US Navy vessel transporting them to Fiji.

Used some 5 months later to communicate with a serviceman from another country (in this case a Canadian brigade, in British Columbia), and paid at the 6c rate for airmail. The American Base Forces datestamp, 24 December 1942, which originally would have had the APO number (913) around the rim, has had it removed, (a pointless exercise, soon discontinued, as the senders address still shows both unit and APO number). Finally the use of a rubber handstamp by the unit censoring officer is also unusual.



Use of American Red Cross envelopes

Use of American Red cross envelopes can be regularly found, normally using the A.P.O. 913 address, and a light brown in colour, and used by staff or those associated with the hospitals or other medical facilities. This early example, dated 15th August 1942, (Form 539) shows an earlier type, with an off-white envelope, and used by a member of 37th Division Artillery, Band. It has been censored at unit level, again applied in red, and postmarked with the U.S APS datestamp, still with APO 37 included around the rim. Orders had just been issued (presumably in the interests of security) that APO numbers should be removed from datestamps, this had yet to be done in this case, however it can be seen that the divisional identity (37th) in the senders address has been obliterated, this is the only example I have seen where this has been done.



I have already commented that mail would be despatched as and when space and shipping was available, and that this had an impact on the time taken to deliver items. This example shows a manuscript date added (Sept 26. 42) which suggests that anything up to 42 days in this case had elapsed, either before the item was delivered, (or possibly the reply was sent). *Note:- Other examples from this period sent surface also show delivery times of between 4 and 6 weeks.*

Blasting coral reefs in the Gilbert & Ellice Islands

36 Corps Engineer Regiment (1962)

Parcel Wrapper

From Marc Parren

“It was a pleasant and interesting surprise to be told by Lieut-Colonel A.E. Younger, the Commanding Officer of 36 Corps Engineer Regiment, that I was to be given the opportunity of volunteering to command a small party required to blast channels through coral reefs in the Gilbert & Ellice Islands during 1962”.

So begins the very detailed account of Capt. T.P. Hardy, RE, that appears in The Royal Engineer's Journal of September 1963. (Vol LXXVII, No 3, pp262-276. Viewable at <https://www.nzsappers.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/1963-September.pdf>).

Recently I acquired a parcel wrapper franked £1/12/3d and posted on 17 June 1962 at Betio, on the Tarawa atoll by Captain Terry Hardy. Captain Hardy of the 36 Corps Engineer Regiment, Royal Engineers commanded a small party, totalling 8 men, drawn from various units, in the islands for about 9 months in 1962. Their task was to blast channels through the coral reefs surrounding the principal islands, so that canoes would be able to pass over to waiting ships at all times, instead of only at high tide. Betio Post Office opened on 5 April 1957 and closed in 1964. (Betio P.O. subsequently relocated and re-opened – Editor)



Fig 1. Part parcel wrapper posted on 17 June 1962 at Betio with undated London Parcel Section handstamp. The above-mentioned article has many photos, at least some of which I suspect were carried in this parcel. Ex-collection Alistair Kennedy.

Marshall Islands

from Terry Commins

The Marshall Islands were named after a British explorer, John Marshall, and are today a Republic, as well as being a “US assisted state”.

Spain claimed the islands in 1592, calling them *Los Pintados*, and in 1885 **sold** some of the islands to Germany and they became part of German New Guinea. German stamps



(precursors or *Vorlaufer*) were first used from 1 October 1888 until overprinted German stamps became available in 1897.

These stamps were also valid on Nauru and much of the German administered islands (e.g., West New Britain). The eagle series were overprinted several times, initially as “Marschall Insein” and then as “Marshall Insein”.



Japan occupied the islands on 16 December 1914 and began utilizing their own stamps and cancels. Meanwhile, remaining stocks of the yacht stamps (mostly from Nauru) were overprinted with “G.R.I.” and new denominations by the new British/Australian administration in New Guinea. These were used exclusively throughout New Britain. The yacht stamps continued to be printed (with the addition of a watermark) in Germany and were sold to collectors up until 1919. This may account for the large numbers of genuine stamps with fake GRI overprints.



These GRI overprints differ markedly from those applied to German issues on Samoa.

During the Japanese occupation the Japanese are reported to have issued their own overprints on the German issues. These were the Japanese characters representing “Nauru” or “Jaluit”, etc. and, if genuine, were probably just a temporary measure until stocks of stamps arrived from Japan. When the islands fell to US forces in 1944, US stamps were eventually used.



With independence the Marshalls began issuing their own stamps in 1984, no doubt with assistance and advice from the US.

Summary:

1888 German precursors

1897 German overprints (followed by yacht series)

1914 Japanese occupation. Japanese overprints

1944 US Postal Service stamps (mostly military up until 1950)

1984 Marshall Islands stamps issued

Jaluit

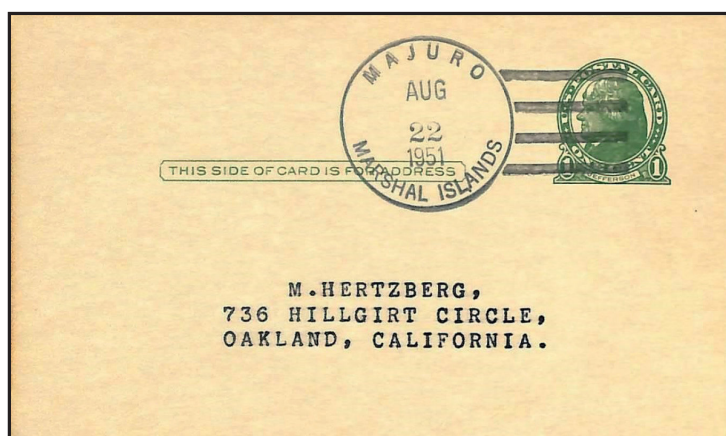


Jaluit atoll was the centre of both German and Japanese administration for the Marshall Islands and cancellations for both of these countries may be found. Jaluit was an important mail hub for the German mail ships, known as the Jaluit Line (for which cancellations also exist). Following WWII it seems the Americans focused more on Ebeye/Kwajalein and the post office on Jaluit may well have been closed.

A sub-branch was opened on 17 April 1989, with a new handstamp coming into use on 27 April. Many historically interesting letters and postcards exist for Jaluit, particularly during the German period.

Jaluit was also an important base for the Imperial Japanese Navy and was also a seaplane base. Jaluit airport remains in operation today.

Majuro

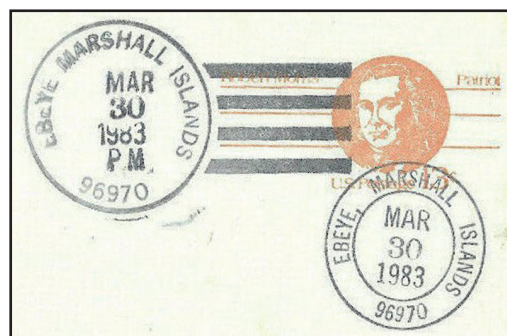


Majuro is currently the capital of the Marshall Islands, with a population of about 20,000. It supplanted Jaluit as the main administrative centre when the US took over in 1944. Although both Germany and Japan were represented on Majuro, cancellations from that period are very rare. Probably the first cancel was the USPS around 1951. Following independence in 1986, the Majuro cancel continued on the new Republic stamps. There is

some interesting overlap where both US and Marshallese stamps were used, often on the same envelope. Pre-cancels exist for Majuro.

Ebeye

Ebeye is the largest centre on the Kwajalein Atoll. During WWII it was a major Japanese seaplane base. Before the early 1950s, a large number of present-day residents of Ebeye lived on small islands throughout Kwajalein Atoll. When Kwajalein island started to be used as a support base for the nuclear tests conducted at Bikini Atoll and Eniwetok Atoll, Marshallese



residents of Kwajalein were relocated by U.S. authorities to a small, planned community constructed on Ebeye, which was largely unpopulated and had served as a Japanese seaplane base before the Pacific War. The result is overpopulation (approx.. 15,000) and poverty. Many of the residents of Ebeye work at the Ronald Reagan Missile Test Center on Kwajalein, but are required to return to Ebeye in the evening.

US and Marshallese issues can be found with the Ebeye cancel. It seems that mail from both Ebeye and Kwajalein are routed through Honolulu, rather than the capital Majuro, so cancels exist for both towns with a Honolulu cancel. Pre-cancels for Ebeye also exist and it is possible Japanese issues may be found.

Kwajalein

“Kwaj” as it is known is directly across the lagoon from Ebeye and has been the site of a US navy base since WWII. Currently it is home to the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Site. At any one time it has a population of about 1,000, mostly US military personnel. Various cancels exist for Kwajalein, including mail routed through Honolulu. This seems possible as the USPO continues to handle mail for the Marshall Islands. It is best to collect covers for Kwajalein (rather than simply postmarks) and these are often found with a cachet in red depicting a coconut tree and a missile.



Republic of the Marshall Islands

The RMI issued their own stamps in 1984. Some of the early issues are attractive, although generally they have now become the usual “cartoon” pieces of paper and often reflect US presidents or military achievements.

However, the Marshall Islands received their “independence” in 1979 and promptly issued two sets of stamps. The first was for the “Establishment of Government, 1 May 1979”. The second set was to commemorate the International Year of the Child. Both sets were printed in Japan. The IYC set exists in small sheets, including perf, imperf and specimen, as well as black and white proofs. They are listed by Scott as “unauthorized”. Purely presumption on our part, but it seems likely that the USPO stepped in and said that, since they handled the mail, they would decide the issuing policy (which they continue to do to this day). Thus we have what are likely regarded as cinderellas, although it appears possible they were authorized by the newly independent government and someone had to pay for the printing. Copies of both of these issues are reasonably rare and add an interesting note to any island collection.



Socorro Island Re-Visited – and Yet Another Island

From Steve Pendleton

A few years ago I write an article for *Pacifica* about one of Mexico's Revillagigedo Islands – Socorro.

I won't repeat the information contained in that article except to say that there is a fairly large Naval base at the south end of that island, with a total population of around 250. This is made up of about 45 sailors and their families. The base is located on a promontory at the south end of the island, with a landing area close by to the east, and finally a modern looking airstrip which has been built a few kms to the north.

In my earlier article I featured one of the few pieces of mail which can sometimes be found which had originated from the island, in this case a 1938 U.S Navy cover from U.S.S. Houston. These covers were produced to record one of the stops made by President Roosevelt on one of his fishing trips. It should be noted that Socorro is rarely, if ever, visited by tourists, since they are not catered for, and there are no resort facilities on the island. The area around the island does however offer other attractions, diving and fishing from vessels anchored off the island, the waters are very clear and abound with large fish, including sharks and game fish.

The island has also been a frequent destination for radio amateur (QSL) expeditions.



(1961 Cover and QSL card)

I have cards from such visits in 1961; 1997; 2004 and 2007. The first of these visits is of particular interest because the visitors also produced a souvenir cover, which appears to have been cancelled on the island.

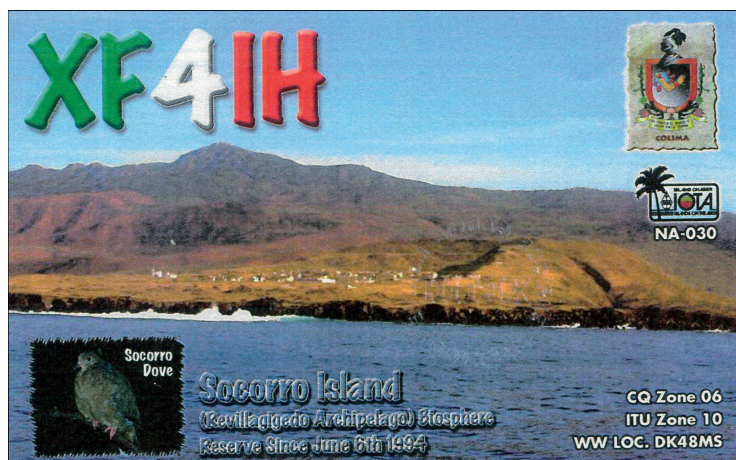
This cover was produced by the “*Expedicion de Radio Aficionados – XF-4*”, from Mexico. It has a cachet showing a detailed map of the island. The postmark is most interesting, being a triple-circled handstamp reading “*Isa Socorro – Correos – Mexico/9 Nov 1961*”. So far these two items are the only ones I have seen from the island, however with the resident population that it has there must be personal and official mail extant.



QSL cards from 2004 (upper) and 2007 (lower) expeditions, (both reduced in size).

The 2004 card shows the group of buildings housing the families of naval personnel.

The 2007 card features the Socorro shoreline.



Socorro is not the only island in this group. There is a volcano named San Bernardicto, plus some rocks, which as far as I am aware have never been inhabited.

Finally there is however another island, far to the west.....



This island is called Clarion Island. It is about 8.5 square miles in area, very flat and arid. I've never seen a cover emanating from this island, however I once had a QSL card from an expedition to Clarion Island, which unfortunately was lost, I therefore cannot supply any other details. I did find out however that Clarion Island does have a Naval Station situated on it, with a total population of 9. With only so few manning this station I very much doubt whether there would be any family members amongst them, so it could be a place very like America's former base at French Frigate Shoals, another "Siberia of the Pacific". If anyone finds something from Clarion Island you may possess a complete postal history of this island.

Tonga – Marine Life Definitives -An Appeal for Help!

Greg Jorgensen, in Australia, informs me that he is compiling an exhibit on the Tonga, Marine Life Definitive Sets of 1984 – 1996. He is anxious to obtain details of covers showing usage of these stamps, in order to identify their use to make up different rates.

If you have covers from this series please contact Greg, (e-mail:- gjorgens@bigpond.net.au), and supply scans. If any of these items are for sale, don't hesitate to include the price you are looking for!

2018 Samoa Overprints

From Steven Zirinsky

Samoa Post Ltd concluded in January 2018, that they needed local rated stamps for domestic usage. Due to cost efficiency and timing, they chose not to go to their stamp supplier and decided to do it themselves locally.

A test run was done on the 90s turtle (SG1161) with a silver overprint. This was deemed unsatisfactory because the overprint wasn't visible. It is unclear to me if this stamp saw postal use. Eleven sheets were done this way and there are three sheets with a double overprint. So, a decision was made to use the more traditional black over print. This was applied to five stamps.

The Tropical Flowers from 2004 was used for three of the five values, the original values of 70c ((SG 1135), 80s (SG 1136) and \$4.00 (SG 1138), were revalued to 50c, \$3.00 and \$5.00 respectively. The other two were taken from other sets- the 50s on 90s (previously mentioned) and \$2.00 on \$1.20 Ginger Flowers (SG 1111).

First day of use was 9 April 2018. It was expected that the supply (see the chart below) would last a year to 15 months. As the chart illustrates, this is a small print run. As with any overprint there were miscues .The original test was done with a double silver overprint, others come with inverted overprints except for the \$5.00 which comes with a shifted overprint only.

Ref	O/p Value \$	Orig Value \$	O/p colour	Sheets ord	Sheet Errors	R'cd	Stamp Qty	Orig Scott No	Orig S.G No
1	.50	.70	black	40	4	36	1,800	1049	1135
2	.50	.90	black	40	4	25	1,250	1073	1161
2A	.50	.90	silver	(11)	3	8	400	1073	1161
3	2.00	1.20	black	40	14	26	1,300	1016	1111
4	3.00	.80	black	40	4	36	1,800	1050	1136
5	5.00	4.99	black	40	11	29	1,450	1052	1138



Silver O/p trial & doubled



Front Cover - Cover carrying the 5 overprints (April *Pacifica* p36 for illustrations).

Additional errors identified during printing.

50s Inverted; 50s; \$2; \$3; \$5 obliterator & O/p inverted.

Guy Slatter Auction. - Prices Realised

Lot	Won	Lot	Won	Lot	Won	Lot	Won	Lot	Won	Lot	Won	Lot	Won
1	145	62	5	121	3	180	16	239	1	297	4	353	2
2	40	63	7	123	6.50	181	2.50	240	1	298	4	354	8
3	18	64	.50	124	2	183	12	241	9	299	5	355	18
4	12	65	.50	125	6	184	1	242	8	300	4	356	8
5	40	66	4	129	21	185	12	243	6	301	4	357	8
8	40	68	.50	130	9	187	6	244	4	302	4	359	2
9	14	69	3	131	32	188	9	245	2	303	.50	360	4
10	95	70	3	132	.50	189	3	246	4	304	.50	361	4
11	85	77	13	133	3	190	3	249	13	306	.50	362	4
12	12	78	26	134	3	191	6	251	2	307	3	363	2
13	14	79	13	135	3	194	.25	252	2	308	3	364	1.50
14	1	80	9	136	33	196	4	254	.25	309	.50	365	8
15	4	81	3	137	6	197	1	255	290	310	.50	366	3
16	2	82	6	138	12	198	.50	256	1	312	1	367	2.50
17	32	83	12	139	4	202	.25	257	3	314	.50	368	7
18	10	84	6	142	1	203	.25	259	20	315	.50	369	35
19	14	85	5	145	1	204	12	260	1	316	.50	370	45
20	8	86	6	146	5	205	12	262	2	317	.50	371	25
21	45	87	15	147	8	206	7	263	1	318	.50	372	8
22	12.50	88	5	148	8	207	9	264	5	319	15	373	3
23	10	89	3	149	8	208	10	265	1.50	320	4	374	2
25	16	90	5	151	19	209	5	266	45	321	2	375	6
27	50	91	7	152	4	210	11	268	.25	322	6	375	6
28	160	92	17	153	10	211	8	269	2	323	6	376	18
29	40	93	5	154	4	212	5	270	2	326	1.50	377	2
31	3	94	.25	155	3	213	1	271	.50	328	2.50	378	7
32	10	96	14	156	7	214	1	272	.50	329	7	379	6
33	3	97	4	157	2	215	1	274	.50	330	6	380	6
35	40	99	2	158	7	217	5	275	.50	332	2	381	9
36	6	100	5	159	7	218	5	276	2	333	2.50	382	18
38	8	101	55	160	4	219	5	278	1	334	5	383	5
40	3	102	18	161	6	220	2	279	1	335	4	384	7
42	2	103	65	162	5	221	2	280	1	336	2	385	8
43	5	104	80	163	7	222	4	281	1	337	2	386	6
44	1	105	10	164	4	224	.50	282	3	339	5	387	10
45	12	106	45	165	1	225	3	283	4	340	2.50	388	6
46	18	107	5	166	2	226	3	284	2	341	5	389	1
49	2	108	9	167	1	227	2.50	285	2	342	2.50		
50	2	109	8	168	2	228	2.50	286	2	343	5		
52	2	110	6	169	2	230	7	287	2	344	15		
54	1	111	11	170	11	231	1	288	6	344	15		
55	4	112	10	171	8	232	9	290	.59	345	12		
56	4	113	11	174	9	233	3	291	50	346	4		
57	12	114	32	175	12	234	5	292	.50	347	6		
58	10	115	2	176	10	235	5	293	.50	348	3		
59	.50	117	8	177	9	236	6	294	.50	349	19		
60	6	119	1	178	6	237	10	295	.50	350	17		
61	5	120	14	179	4	238	2	296	.50	352	2.50		

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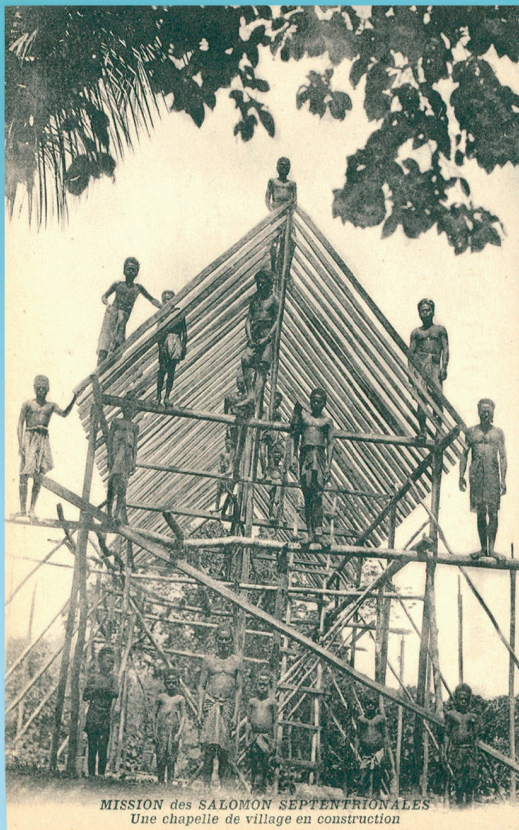
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